



DUST MITE PROTOCOL

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Conduct this protocol only for children who are allergic to mites.

Key Messages:

- Dust mites are found in every home in our area, no matter how clean the house.
- Use of allergy control covers on mattresses and pillows is the most important method for controlling mites.
- Keeping the moisture level in the house low (below 50% relative humidity) helps to control the dust mite population.

Recommended Client Actions:

- ❖ Put allergy control covers on the mattress & pillow.
- ❖ The allergy covers should be wiped off with a damp, not wet, cloth or vacuumed using the hard-edged attachment tool once a month.
- ❖ Wash covers only once a year or if soiled.
- ❖ Wash bedding materials (sheets, pillowcases, and blankets) weekly in hot (130°) water. Return the temperature back to a safe 120° after washing bedding.
- ❖ Dry bedding materials in the dryer using the HOT cycle for at least 30 minutes.
- ❖ Keep stuffed animals out of the child's bed and sleeping area.
- ❖ Wash stuffed animals in the same manner as bedding each month or freeze them for 48 hours.
- ❖ Dust child's bedroom twice a week.
- ❖ Vacuum carpet or damp-mop hard floor in the child's bedroom twice a week.
- ❖ Remove upholstered furniture from the child's bedroom. Replace with wood, vinyl or leather furniture.
 - ❖ If unable to change furniture, then vacuum upholstered furniture weekly.
- ❖ Avoid sleeping or lying on upholstered furniture or carpets.

Recommended Client Actions: Lower priority

- ☐ Use fleece or other easily washable blankets to replace blankets/quilts/duvets that trap dust and are more difficult to wash.
- ☐ Remove cloth-drapes, curtains and other window treatments from the child's bedroom and use plastic or vinyl roller shades or blinds instead.
 - ☐ If unable to remove drapes, vacuum them weekly.
- ☐ Remove carpets from the child's bedroom. Before taking up the carpet, check the condition of the underlying floor by lifting up a corner of the carpet.
 - ☐ If the client is a tenant, ask the client to check with the landlord/manager first before doing so. Be sure the client thinks it's reasonable to approach the landlord manager on this issue before proceeding.
- ☐ Remove carpets from other rooms, especially those that lie on concrete. Before taking up the carpet, check the condition of the underlying floor by lifting up a corner of the carpet.
 - ☐ If the client is a tenant, ask the client to check with the landlord/manager first before doing so. Be sure the client thinks it's reasonable to approach the landlord manager on this issue before proceeding.
- ☐ Store cleaned sheets in plastic bags to keep them from getting dusty.

CAS/CHW Actions:

- **Assess prior education received by client and client's knowledge.**
- **Help client put allergy control covers on the mattress and pillow or verify that covers fit properly.**
- **Show how to clean off allergy control covers with sponge or damp cloth, or instruct how to vacuum the covers for the once a month cleaning.**

Supplies:

- ☐ Allergen control mattress & pillow covers

Educational Handouts:

- ☐ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" Environmental Protection Agency; EPA/402-F-99-005 (English, Spanish, Vietnamese)

- ☐ “How to Control Dust in Your Child’s Bedroom” You Can Control Asthma: A Book for the Family; Georgetown/AAFA, pages 14-15 (English, Spanish)

Referrals:

None

Future Visits: Assessment

- **Assess for presence of allergy control covers on mattress & pillow.**
 - ☐ Indicate in database if covers are not being used.
- Check to see if there are any problems with the mattress covers.

CAS/CHW Future Actions:

- Check the home problem list for any mite-related issues to address during this visit:
 - ☐ high humidity ☐ sources of dampness ☐ upholstered furniture
 - ☐ presence of stuffed animals ☐ insufficient washing or freezing of stuffed animals
 - ☐ insufficient vacuuming ☐ insufficient washing of bedding materials

Background:

- ☐ Dust mites are the **most important indoor cause of allergies** that can trigger asthma.
- ☐ **60%** of Healthy Homes-I participants were allergic to dust mites.
- ☐ Getting rid of dust mites can be a big help in controlling asthma for people who are allergic to mites. **In some cases, getting rid of mites can eliminate all asthma symptoms.**
- ☐ The most important method for controlling mites is to **use allergy control covers** on mattresses and pillows.
- ☐ Dust mites are tiny creatures related to spiders and ticks. Their source of food is human skin scales and animal dander.
- ☐ The highest levels of mites are found mainly in dust found in the mattress and bedding (blankets, sheets, pillows, bed covers), material.
- ☐ Washing bedding materials (sheets, pillowcases, blankets) weekly at a temperature of at least 130 degrees will kill dust mites. Many homes will not have water this hot.
 - (1) Wash bedding at a laundromat which does have hot water, OR
 - (2) Dry bedding outdoors on sunny days (best to lay sheets directly on a hard surface

so that mites get hot and dried out), OR

(3) Use the hottest water available in the home (least effective method), OR

(4) Dry bedding in a hot dryer for 30 minutes.

- ☐ Dust mites are also found in carpets, drapes, soft toys and upholstered furniture.
- ☐ Mites get their water from the moisture in the air so **dust mites grow best in moist, humid places.**